



Town of Townsend
Considerations Related to
Reconstitution of a Municipal Police Department

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to discuss the reconstitution of a municipal Police Department within the Town of Townsend. Efforts have been made to review the financial, administrative, and operating concerns.

Townsend has grown significantly over the past 20 years. The population of the Town of Townsend has grown from 346 people in 2000. Today, there are close to 2,700 residents based on the most recent estimations by the Delaware Population Consortium. In addition to our current population, Townsend is anticipating an additional 258 units to be developed over the next few years in two scheduled developments. These two developments; Woods at Hidden Creek and Townsend Acres may result in an additional 750 residents.

In addition, Townsend has seen significant interest by developers to provide retail and light industrial operations along route 71 and to provide restoration of property within the Heart of Townsend.

BACKGROUND

Currently, police services are provided by arrangement with the Delaware State Police. Delaware State Police maintains responsibility for police response within the Town limits from Troop 9 in Odessa. Given the large area of responsibility, Canal to Dover and Bay to the Maryland Border, and with limited resources, DSP is often responding to calls for service from areas significantly outside the Town limits. Response times have been inconsistent, depending on urgency and proximity to Townsend.

In addition to the above sector patrols, the Town pays for extra duty Troopers to patrol the Town on a scheduled basis, generally equal to approximately 12 hours per week at a rate of \$104 per hour. This is usually accomplished through three (3) four (4) hour shifts per week or less with additional Troopers assigned for Town special events, etc. The average cost per week for this service is \$1,248. The Town spends between \$60,000 and \$65,000 per year for approximately 12 hours of coverage per week.

In 2019, the Town of Townsend worked with graduate students from the University of Delaware to evaluate the need for and options to provide police services for the Town of Townsend. The research group worked with the Town Manager and their professor to evaluate several options including: maintaining the relationship with Delaware State Police in its current form, migrating to New Castle County Police, facilitating the development of a regional police force for the MOT area, or reestablishing its own municipal police force.

Recently, under the direction of the Mayor and the Town Council, the Town Manager and Chair of the Public Safety Committee began the process by seeking the guidance and input from several police chiefs who have been involved in developing municipal police services of similar communities. In addition, research was conducted to determine the potential need for police services and to review various options for providing services for the residents of Townsend in a manner that provides protection that is efficient and cost effective for our community. In addition, we reviewed the regulatory and administrative activities necessary to reestablish a Townsend Police Department along with estimating cost for comparison with other options.

Meetings were also held with New Castle County officials and with representatives from Delaware State Police. New Castle County advised that they could take over policing services for Townsend and that the cost would be added to resident's County taxes at a rate of approximately \$340,000 in additional taxes (approximately \$409 per residence based on valuation) with no increase in services compared to existing services offered by Delaware State Police at no charge.

Numerous efforts were made by Mayor McDonald and the Town Manager to contact Middletown Mayor Kenneth L. Branner, Jr and the Town Manager Morris Deputy, to explore the potential for a regional police department in the MOT area. Unfortunately, we have not received a reply to our attempts. It is our belief that the development of a regional police force or a mutual aid arrangement with Middletown are both unlikely.

Currently the Town purchases extra duty patrols from the State Contractor at \$104 per hour. If extra duty patrols were requested of Delaware State Police for 40 hours per week, the cost would exceed \$4,160 per week or an estimated \$216,320 per year. Based on a review of the data provided by the Delaware State Police, ideal coverage would be 112 hours a week. Therefore, this number was used for estimating purposes. The cost for 112 hours a week would exceed \$605,695 per year.

If the Town migrated to a municipal police service, the objective would be to select an operational Police Chief at 40 hours per week at an estimated salary rate of \$70,000 to \$75,000 per year. Eventually the Town would add part time part time police officers to build coverage to approximately 16 hours a day or 112 hours a week. Salary for a local police service would cost an estimated cost of \$2,768 a week for 112 hours coverage or estimated \$143,936 per year. Therefore, the exploration of the reconstitution of a Townsend Police Department has emerged as a viable option.

The Mayor, Town Manager and Public Safety Chair met with LT. Lloyd and Captain Hall from DSP Troop 9 to discuss DSP efforts to support a part time police force in Townsend. As they do with other jurisdictions, DSP will continue to patrol Townsend in support of local operations, particularly on off hours or when needed. DSP will also provide advanced police services such as forensics and investigations, as necessary.

KEY FINDINGS

Need Assessment and Calls for Service

The Town of Townsend is one of 57 municipalities in the State of Delaware. The Town of Townsend has grown significantly over the past 20 years and is now the 18th most populated community in the State. As such, Townsend is one of only three jurisdictions with 500 or more residents without a municipal police department. Townsend is the only community with 1,200 residents or more without a municipal police service. Of the 30 most populated Incorporated municipalities, Townsend is the only municipality without a municipal police service. Below is a list of incorporated municipalities in Delaware and the status of municipal police department.

Delaware Population Consortium 2020 Estimate		County		Police Service
Wilmington city	70,325	NCC		Y
Dover city	38,412	Kent		Y
Newark city	34,035	NCC		Y
Middletown town	23,166	NCC		Y
Milford city	11,898	Kent/Sussex		Y
Smyrna town	11,840	Kent		Y
Seaford city	8,174	Sussex		Y
Georgetown town	7,721	Sussex		Y
Elsmere town	5,858	NCC		Y
New Castle city	5,408	NCC		Y
Millsboro town	4,629	Sussex		Y
Laurel town	4,446	Sussex		Y
Harrington city	3,651	Kent		Y
Camden town	3,543	Kent		Y
Clayton town	3,488	Kent		Y
Lewes city	3,389	Sussex		Y
Milton town	3,075	Sussex		Y
Townsend town	2,693	NCC		N
Selbyville town	2,593	Sussex		Y
Bridgeville town	2,416	Sussex		Y
Ocean View town	2,237	Sussex		Y
Delmar town	1,858	Sussex		Y
Delaware City city	1,840	NCC		Y
Cheswold town	1,692	Kent		Y
Rehoboth Beach city	1,578	Sussex		Y
Wyoming town	1,562	Kent		Y
Blades town	1,484	Sussex		Y

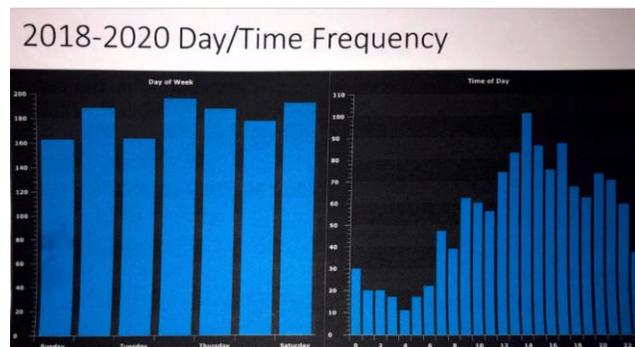
Felton town	1,420	Kent		<i>Y</i>
Bethany Beach town	1,271	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Rehoboth Beach city town	1,163	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Bellefonte town	1,162	NCC		<i>N</i>
Newport town	1,037	NCC		<i>Y</i>
Frankford town	1,007	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Dagsboro town	946	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Frederica town	852	Kent		<i>Y</i>
Millville town	639	Sussex		<i>N</i>
South Bethany town	541	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Fenwick Island town	454	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Ellendale town	443	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Arden village	440	NCC		<i>N</i>
Dewey Beach town	408	Sussex		<i>Y</i>
Houston town	406	Kent		<i>N</i>
Bowers town	376	Kent		<i>N</i>
Odessa town	359	NCC		<i>N</i>
Magnolia town	291	Kent		<i>N</i>
Kenton town	272	Kent		<i>Y</i>
Ardentown village	270	NCC		<i>N</i>
Slaughter Beach town	246	Sussex		<i>N</i>
Little Creek town	237	Kent		<i>N</i>
Ardencroft village	216	NCC		<i>N</i>
Leipsic town	205	Kent		<i>N</i>
Bethel town	205	Sussex		<i>N</i>
Woodside town	194	Kent		<i>N</i>
Viola town	165	Kent		<i>Y</i>
Henlopen Acres town	147	Sussex		<i>N</i>
Farmington town	122	Kent		<i>N</i>
Hartly town	76	Kent		<i>N</i>
				<i>N=18</i>
				<i>Y=39</i>

Request for Police Services

Captain Hall and Lt. Lloyd of Delaware State Police Troop 9 provided a 3 year analysis of police responses to the Town of Townsend. The following is a general outline of requests for services for the past three years. It is believed that these calls for service are reduced as residents are reluctant to call State Police for local policing assistance for several reasons.

2018	2019	2020
384 Police Responses	458 Police Responses	433 Police Responses
73 Crime Reports	90 Crime Reports	65 Crime Reports
29 Misdemeanors	39 Misdemeanors	36 Misdemeanors
19 Felony	19 Felony	16 Felony
3 Stolen Vehicles Reports	2 Stolen Vehicles Reports	4 Stolen Vehicles Reports
2 Missing Persons Reports	3 Missing Persons Reports	3 Missing Persons Reports
34 Domestic Disputes	44 Domestic Disputes	60 Domestic Disputes
272 Non Criminal Field Services Reports	319 Non Criminal Field Services Reports	301 Non Criminal Field Services Reports

In addition to the above Lt. Lloyd of the DSP Troop 9 completed a study to assess day and time frequency for calls for service. Overall there was no significant difference in the request for service by week day. There was a significance as to the time of day that services were requested with the highest demand for services between 9:00 am and 11:00 pm.



Authority

The Town of Townsend Charter does provide for the establishment of a police force. The Charter defines the role of the Town Council to approve rules and regulations as appropriate for the organization and control of the police department and it also defines title and role of the Chief of Police. The action of reestablishing a municipal police service is within the authority of the Town Council without modification of the Town Charter. The process for selection of a Chief of Police would be through interview and approval of the Town Council via Resolution.

7.8 Police Force

7.8.1. The Town Council may appoint a police force consisting of such person or persons as the Town Council deems wise and advisable. The Town Council shall, from time to time, adopt rules and regulations as may be necessary for the organization, government and

control of the police force. The members of the force shall be subject to the direction and supervision of a police officer of the Town who shall have the title of Chief of Police. The Town Council also may choose to subcontract all or a position of the staffing of the police force for the Town of Townsend to another police force in its jurisdiction.

7.8.2. The police force shall preserve peace and order and shall compel obedience within the town limits to the ordinances of the town and the laws of the State; and they shall have such other duties, as the Town Council shall from time to time prescribe. Each member of the police force shall be vested with all powers and authority of a constable of New Castle County within the town limits, and in the case of the pursuit of an offender, his or her power and authority shall extend to all parts of the State of Delaware. The Chief of Police or another designated officer will be present at all Town Council meetings, to provide a report of the Town's criminal activities or lack thereof, and to keep the peace.

7.8.3. The Chief of Police shall report directly to the Town Council unless, upon majority vote, the Town Council shall assign him or her to report to the Town Manager.

General Estimated Costs for Police Services

A review with several police chiefs over the past few months has resulted in the following cost estimates for first year. These numbers should be considered for planning purposes and are deliberately calculated at the higher end of any estimate.

Delaware average is 2.6 officers per 1,000 residents. The International Association of Chiefs of Police recommends 2.2 officers per 1,000 residents and Sworn and Civilian personnel is approximately 3 to 4 personnel in total per 1,000 residents.

Police Chief Salary and Benefits	\$70,00 to \$80,000
Benefits	\$23,000 to \$25,000 (Estimate)
Part time Police Officer	\$38,000 to \$42,000 FTE (\$18.27 Hr. to \$20.19 Hr.)
Police Administrative Assistant	\$36,000 to \$40,000 FTE
Uniforms & Maintenance	\$1,500 to \$3,000
Equipment	\$3,000 to \$5,000
Police vehicle	\$40,000 to \$45,000 (Estimate, Possible to secure through Surplus)
Insurance	\$10,000 EST
Vehicle Fuel & Maintenance	\$4,912 to \$5,500 Yearly
Radios, Radar Etc.	\$1,500 to \$2,000
Firearms, Ammunition etc.	
Glock	\$500
Shotgun	\$300
Rounds	\$500 to \$750 Yearly
Body Worn Camera	\$1,500 plus storage
Training, Meetings, Conventions, Dues	\$2,500 Yearly
Facility	
Renovation of Old Town Hall	\$35,000
Processing Room	\$ 6,000
Office Equipment	\$ 5,000
Computer Workstation	\$2,200 (2 Laptops, Docking station & Monitor)

First Year estimated cost in bold would be an estimated \$199,250 to \$219,250
 Annual cost is estimated at \$225,000 to \$246,000 (1 Chief, Clerk and 2 PT Officers)

Funding and Grants

Currently, within the Municipal budget there is a line item for contracting DSP Extra duty patrols. The budget allocates \$60,000 in the FY 2022 budget. If Council chooses to establish a municipal police department, these funds could be reallocated to that purpose. In addition, there are funds allocated to capital projects and other expenses that can be managed to allow for the establishment of a municipal police service with minimal impact to the Town Budget. There should not be a need to increase taxes to cover cost to establish nor provide police services at this time.

The Town receives a small percentage of the ticket revenue generated from each fine issued by Delaware State Police within the Town limits. This may increase should the Town issue the violation through our own municipal police department. There will also be limited police revenue via fines and enforcement actions. Currently, the Town receives some revenue from fines written by State Police. The Town is estimated to receive approximately \$8,000 in FY 2021.

It is unlikely that significant grants will be available for the initial implementation. However, funds from the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan (COVID-19 related) may be a potential source of funds to renovate the maintenance building (659 South Street) for use as a police station. The Town Manager and Financial Officer Continue to monitor the requirements for these grants.

We have been advised that for most Delaware based grants for law enforcement, a municipality must have a three year operational record before they are able to apply for many state grants such as the State Aid to Local Law Enforcement Program. Other grants in support of local policing include Community Oriented Policing Services Grants (COPS Grant), Police Pension Subsidy, and various CJC grants and resources. Over time the Town may be able to apply for Emergency Illegal Drug Enforcement Grants and others targeting traffic incident management and targeted enforcement activity.

To access these grants, the Town will need to employ a Police Chief, establish a police department, and coordinate applications with the grant management expertise of a Police Chief and the Town Manager. Hiring a Chief of Police that is familiar with the nuances of these Delaware specific grants is key to success of this program.

Community Impact Fees

Currently, Townsend has the authority to establish and assess impact fees to new construction within the Town limits. The Town assesses a Fire Impact Fee to assist in funding the Fire Company improvements to provide services as the Town grows. The fee is approximately \$750 for each new structure built within the Town limits.

An option to generate revenue for the utilization of a municipal police force and to offset impact to community services, would be to develop a community impact fee of 1% of the sale price of new homes. There are approximately 258 structures to be built between Townsend Acres and the Woods at Hidden Creek. At an average selling price of \$350,000 this could generate an estimated \$3,500 per new residence or \$903,000 over the next three to five years.

An option would be to combine these impact fees to create one community impact fee that the various departments would apply to annually based on need and increased services.

TIMELINE

If approved, the phase in of a municipal police department would be expected to take a minimum of six months to 9 months from the date of hire of a Chief of Police. The first few months would be focused on establishing administrative and implementation plans to include developing departmental policies and procedures.

- Month 0 - 3 Hire Police Chief to develop implementation strategy department and patrol operations, secure resources and implement departmental administrative operations.
- Month 4 – 6 Initiate community police operations to include neighborhood outreach and patrol activities. Coordinate with community groups and Town Council to affirm patrol priorities.
- Month 6 - 9 Secure Full-time Police Administrative Assistant.
- Month 9 - 12 Review the need to and possibly employ first part time police officer.
- Month 12 - 18 Consider 1 additional PT Police Officer with limited PT officer.
- Month 18 - 24 Review the need to enhance operations with second full time police officer. Review Grant eligibility requiring multiple years or activity.

CONCLUSION

The Town of Townsend is had significant growth over the past decade which has increased the demand for law enforcement and public safety services for the protection of the safety and protection of the community. As the Town grows, both internally and through annexation, it is increasing clear that a comprehensive strategic plan for public safety is needed to address increases in quality of life as well as criminal activity in and around the community. While there were some decreases in calls for services in 2021, the overall call for services has increased and is expected to increase as the Town grows.

Over the past few years Town's leadership has looked at multiple options including increasing extra duty patrol, the establishment of an MOT Regional Police Department, building a relationship with Middletown to provide contracted police services, and exploring transitioning police services to New Castle County.

None of the above options provide the coverage at a reasonable cost that the reestablishment of a municipal police service may provide over time. Given the availability of funding, FY 2022 may be the best year to initiate the reestablishment of a municipal police force with minimal impact to the Town overall budget.

The Maintenance Building may be modified to provide a police headquarters and provide effective visibility to visitors and residents.

The next steps, if the Town Council approves is to announce the intention to reestablish a municipal police department; review and select a candidate for Chief of Police who can provide leadership in building a renewed police service for our community; notify the State of our intention, and secure equipment and resources necessary.